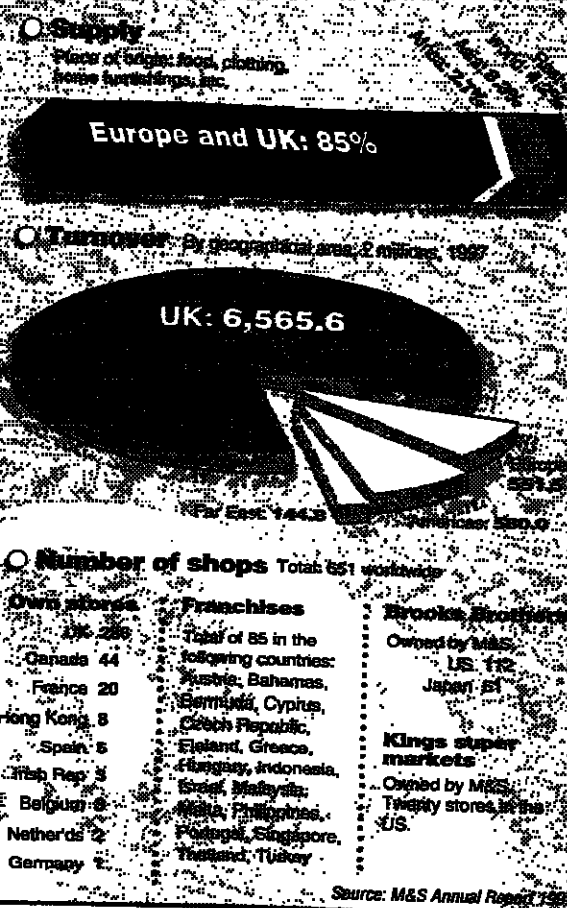




In the bag... M&S said it was delighted with the verdict, which had completely restored its reputation after World in Action's allegations over child labour

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

The global empire



'I am delighted that we have been vindicated... We were falsely and wickedly accused of exploiting children and deliberately mislabelling goods. All completely untrue'

Sir Richard Greenbury, M&S chairman

Judge's short cut through libel maze

Why a projected six-week trial lasted three days

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

AN unprecedented move by the judge, Mr Justice Popplewell, brought about the dramatic collapse of the libel action by Marks & Spencer against Granada, just three days into what was set to be a six-week trial costing well over £2 million.

The judge decided to ask the jury in advance of the trial what meaning the World in Action programme conveyed to viewers. Did it mean that the retail group knew child labour was being exploited at the Moroccan factory used by its supplier, and had deliberately misled its

customers by knowingly selling goods made abroad under the label "Made in the UK"?

Once the jury found those were the meanings conveyed, Granada had no choice but to throw in its hand and agree to pay M&S a total of £700,000 in costs and damages. It had no evidence that the company had such knowledge and therefore could not "justify" the defamatory statements — prove that they were true.

Granada's case was that all the programme was saying — and all it had to prove — was that the company had inadequate checks to stop the exploitation and deception happening.

The judge's innovation, for which he is believed to have sought the approval of the Master of the Rolls, Lord



Mr Justice Popplewell: what would 'Mr Average' think?

Bingham, could be widely used to short-circuit libel trials and save costs in future. Libel lawyers said it could probably be applied in a quarter of libel cases — those where the sole issue is over the meaning of an article or programme.

Geraldine Proudler, solicitor for Marks & Spencer, said it would create problems for lawyers representing newspapers and other defendants,

who would have to be careful how they pleaded their cases about meaning. "It's going to be a bit of a high-wire act. Up to now you have approached it on the basis that it will all come out in the wash over six weeks during the trial. But this jury never even heard the evidence."

David Hooper, a leading libel solicitor, said: "I think it's going to make it even more of a lottery rather than less. You're giving the jury a role perhaps better exercised by the judge."

He said a judge could give a ruling much earlier in the case before the parties spent huge sums on collecting evidence. The collapse of the case has saved around £1 million in costs, but Granada is thought to have run up nearly £900,000 before trial and will have to pay Marks & Spencer's £850,000 costs plus £50,000 damages.

Though Mr Justice Popplewell said he was not intending to lay down general propositions for other cases, he is one of only two judges who have taken the programme to court, including arguments about what the words meant, before reaching a verdict on whether the plaintiff was libelled. Mr Justice Popplewell said in a judgment delivered

on the first day of the trial, but not published at the time, that he accepted his idea was unprecedented. He realised that it was not the practice to decide first what the programme or article meant. "It might be thought, as a matter of general practice, that that would be tried first so that the parties are not titing at windmills throughout a six-week trial without having the faintest idea what the jury are doing to decide about meaning," he added.

The jury had to decide what "Mr Average Viewer" would have taken the programme to mean. "Mr Average Viewer will not have sat through six weeks of evidence and heard all sorts of matters which have no bearing at all on meaning."

The practice up to now has been to let the jury hear all the evidence over the whole trial, including arguments about what the words meant, before reaching a verdict on whether the plaintiff was libelled. Mr Justice Popplewell said in a judgment delivered

Fast track libel sinks Granada TV's flagship

continued from page 1

and now head of regional programmes for Granada, will take over editing World in Action when Mr Boulton leaves.

Sir Richard Greenbury, the chairman of M&S, said: "I am delighted that we have been vindicated in taking this action and that our reputation has been restored. We were falsely and wickedly accused of exploiting children as young as 10 and deliberately mislabelling goods. All completely untrue."

An M&S spokeswoman said that as a result of World in Action's investigation the firm had imposed a "substantial" financial penalty on its suppliers, Desmonds and Sons, based in Northern Ireland, and now used different suppliers to import goods from Sicome, Morocco.

"We abhor the use of child labour as a principle," she said.

"But the legal age of employment in Morocco is 12 and we can't dictate in a country that's not our own what the employment practices should be."

World in Action pointed out that M&S did not deny that suppliers had used child labour or that there had been deliberate mislabelling by the supplier.

EU-US market launched

Transatlantic free trade zone teams euro up with dollar as Pacific Rim dream fades

Martin Walker in Brussels and Michael White

AMBITIOUS proposals which could revolutionise trade relations between the United States and the European Union and provide a huge economic boost on both sides of the Atlantic will be launched by the European Commission today.

The launch of the New Transatlantic Marketplace, which aims to scrap remaining tariffs on goods, harmonise regulations and liberalise services, will ease fears that the single market will turn into a "fortress Europe".

But EU officials acknowledge the market-opening measures will step up pressure on Japan and other key trading countries to liberalise.

The proposal, which has received a preliminary welcome in Washington after long discussions with the Clinton administration and with both sides in the US Congress, is being marketed by the EU trade commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, as a way to "enhance the broader political

relationship between the US and the European Union".

Although the scheme contains no explicit reference to the single currency, it looks to a future dominated by the dollar and the euro — the currencies of the two economic systems that between them account for two-thirds of world trade and more than half the planet's gross domestic product.

"The strong message we bring back from the US is that this has a good chance, both in Congress and in the administration, because of the common values and general level of development and civilisation we Europeans share with the US," one senior European official involved in the negotiations said yesterday.

After years of fruitless discussions about a transatlantic free trade area, the marketplace proposal is being launched because the Asian financial crisis has revealed the limitations of the Clinton administration's infatuation with the Pacific Rim, as its new commercial partner.

It also follows the defeat of President Bill Clinton's plan to extend the North American

Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) to Chile and Argentina, after congressional fears of low-wage competition and the dilution of US environmental standards.

"The issues of wage levels, labour rights and environmental standards which nag US relations with other countries simply do not crop up with Europe," the EU official added.

The plan's eight-part agenda is highly ambitious, with the EU recognising that freedom of services will require some liberalisation of visa and work permit regimes, so providers of services can work freely in both the US and the EU.

The key provisions are:

- A free trade area in services.
- A commitment to end all tariffs on goods by 2010.
- Further liberalisation, aimed at a free trade area, of government procurement, intellectual property and investment.
- Scrapping technical and non-tariff barriers to trade through mutual recognition of technical and safety standards and consumer safeguards.

"We see this as having a similar economic growth effect to the Uruguay Round [of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)] — an addition of 1 per cent of GDP for both the EU and the US," an EU official said yesterday, citing internal surveys.

This would mean, after five years of the marketplace, an extra \$60 billion in GDP for both the US and the EU.

"It should enhance the broader agenda of multilateral trade liberalisation within the WTO (World Trade Organisation), to which we are committed," he says. The draft proposal that Sir Leon will present to the European Commission today.

"It should not lead to the creation of new trade obstacles to third countries or weaken their support for multilateral liberalisation."

The plan excludes the most contentious issues of transatlantic trade — agricultural goods and audiovisual services — which earlier proposals broke down.

"There is no sense in having negotiations about the impossible. We have agreed that we should tackle the stuff that is hard, but achievable," an EU spokesman said.

Meanwhile, Sir Leon's former Cabinet ally on Europe, Kenneth Clarke, warned the Tory leader William Hague against "shattering 50 years of reasonable Conservative unity" on Europe, and still "getting it all wrong".

In an equally upbeat account of Europe's trading future, Mr Clarke differed only in regretting that monetary union should be "the key issue of European policy".

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As Bob Astles tells one of his many stories, the magpie craps on his cuff. He affects not to notice. I wonder if it was through that kind of not noticing, or willing self-deception, that he felt able to stay by Idi Amin's side. Giles Foden on a one-time adviser to the Ugandan dictator

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The Guardian Wednesday March 4 1998

Fishing club bemoans loss of licence after Gary Barlow buys estate

Singing squire winds up angling idyll on his lake

David Ward

GARY Barlow, former Take That star and country squire, has told anglers who have fished his Cheshire lake for 50 years to sling their collective hooks.

Mr Barlow, owner of 80 prime acres at Delamere Manor, has declined to renew the lease of a small fishing club which boasts judges and doctors among its members. Paths which once led to tranquil moments with a rod beneath the trees are now blocked by signs saying "Private property - keep out".

The singer, who bought the estate for about £1 million, is said to be more interested in his privacy than the income from the 30 members of the Delamere Manor Flyfishers' Club, who have stocked the lake with 3,000 trout.

The estate, protected by an 8ft fence and security lights, has been compared by a letter writer to the local paper as a cross between Caesar's Palace and Stalag Luft V.

"When Mr Barlow was going to buy the manor, the owner told us he was not prepared to renew the licence. So that was that. Bang. He never gave us a reason," said Harry Gardner, aged 79, a retired accountant and former treasurer of the flyfishers' club (subscription £150).



Gary Barlow... Wish for privacy overrode anglers' pleas

"I've been fishing on the lake since 1955. We put our own fish in, and if the members didn't think there were enough we put more in. We looked after the lake, cleared away reeds and tidied it up."

Mr Gardner has hung up his rod for good. The lake was close enough to his home to enable him to slip down for a quiet hour without leaving his wheelchair-bound wife alone for too long. Nowhere else is as convenient.

"I do not have many hopes

that we will be able to get back. Mr Barlow doesn't react to the community and doesn't rush out to open fairs. I talked to him once when he came down with his dog and sat on the bench beside me. I made various noises, telling him we had improved the security of his estate by our presence."

Jenny Harrison, a magistrate, joined the club 10 years ago. "I was fishing the day Mr Barlow came to look round the place with his girlfriend," she said. "I asked them who they were - we always stopped strangers from

trampling over the estate. He explained that the owner knew he was there, and it was only later that I realised who he was. But that incident should have showed him how much the fishing club looked after the estate. We are hoping Mr Barlow will move on and that new owners will allow us back."

Leslie Jones, a retired dentist aged 77 who has fished at Delamere for 40 years, admitted that Mr Barlow was "entitled not to renew our lease. It's his lake - he would have had free fishing. But it's his house and his lake... it's a pity but there we are."

Mr Barlow, now in Stockholm on the latest leg of a 35-date European tour, will return to Britain next week.

His spokesman said the singer ended the club's lease in the interests of security: "Gary and his family live there and do not want people wandering around the estate. There are still gangs of girls hanging round outside the house, and if the gates were open anyone could get in."

He added darkly that local people had tried "damned hard" to make sure that Mr Barlow did not get planning permission for extensions and improvements to his mansion. "Gary refuses to buckle under to intimidation in any shape or form."

Couple ordered to reveal source

Judge sets 28-day time limit for disclosure in case over Express and Fergie biography

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

A FORMER deputy editor of the Daily Express and his wife were ordered yesterday to disclose who gave them a pre-publication copy of a controversial biography of the Duchess of York.

In the latest court battle over journalists' right to keep their sources confidential, Mr Justice Neuberger ordered Ian Monk and his wife, Anita, to reveal the source within 28 days. Their solicitors, Swepstone Walsh, said they were likely to seek leave to appeal.

The couple, with Express Newspapers and Express editor Richard Addis, were sued for breach of copyright by Alan Stanger, author of Fergie: Her Secret Life, and the publisher, Michael O'Mara Books.

The author and publisher are seeking damages against the Express, Mr Addis and Mr Monk for using the book in "spoiler" articles aimed at the Daily Mail, which paid £101,000 for serialisation.

The defendants say the book was not used in writing the articles. Yesterday's ruling was a preliminary one, with the main damages action still not set down for trial.

Unless the order is overturned on appeal, the couple could face jail if they maintain their refusal.

Anita Monk was arrested by police at Heathrow trying to sell a photocopy of the book to the Sun, but no action was taken by the Crown Prosecution Service.

She was said in court yesterday to have been acting "on a frolic of her own" without the knowledge of her husband or the Express, having taken the copy of the book from her husband's briefcase. The Sun alerted the police, who sent undercover officers posing as journalists to meet her at Heathrow.

Mr Monk, aged 44, now associate editor (features) at the Sun, and his wife, 52, were also ordered to pay compensatory damages of £125 each.

An inquiry will be held later into possible additional

damages, after the trial of the main action.

The solicitor for Michael O'Mara Books, Michael Gardner, said disclosure was sought so that action could be taken against the source.

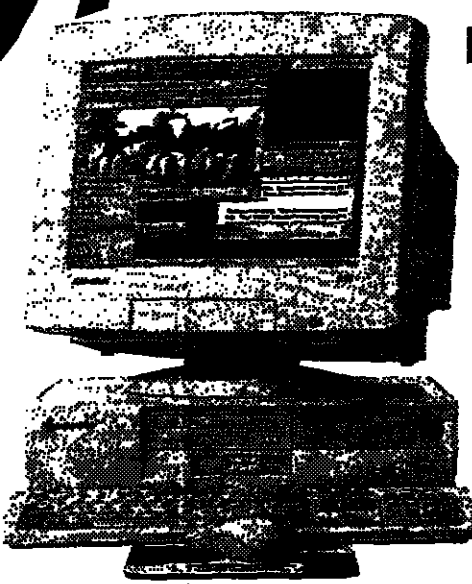
Mr Monk argued that he should be entitled to keep his sources confidential under the protection of sources provisions in section 10 of the Contempt of Court Act.

The publisher and author contended that this was a case in which disclosure should be made in "the interests of justice," one of the exceptional cases laid down by section 10.

The judge said the commercial reputation of two innocent companies, Michael O'Mara Books and the American printers, Donnellys, appeared likely to be at risk and this could be minimised if the source was disclosed.

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New-style Missoni in Milan



A zipped, multi-coloured coat from Angela Missoni's show in Milan. PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCA BRUNO

Heiress highly apparent at top fashion house

Susannah Frankel on the regeneration of a famous name

A NEW generation of young designers is taking over at Italian fashion houses - and yesterday Angela Missoni showed Milan that the future is in safe hands.

Last season it was made official that Ms Missoni would succeed her parents, Tai and Rosita, who led her on to the catwalk as they took their bows. But this season, Angela - who has given up her own label to concentrate on her parents' line - came out alone.

Her parents first took to the catwalk in 1967, causing a scandal when they asked models to remove their bras: they said underwear looked ugly through their fine knitted designs.

However, the 1970s were the heyday of the Missoni label, with Tai and Rosita's fluid fashion in rainbow-coloured stripes - horizontal, vertical and zig-zag - as much in demand as Gucci and Prada today.

More than 20 years on, though still very beautiful, critics claimed the label had lost its relevance. But yesterday's show suggested Angela Missoni is set to take it successfully into the next millennium - with colours more muted than before, harder edged tailored clothes and the sequined evening wear noticably more contemporary.

Whereas fashion editors had formerly been known to reach for their sun glasses to view Missoni gowns, this time there were no more than a few muted sequins scattered like waves of fish scales on light-as-a-feather cowwhats.

Tai and Rosita Missoni are two of Italian fashion's most loved names. Yesterday their daughter proved herself worthy of their crown. The signature was still there - but with a thoroughly modern flourish.

Matricide case goes to appeal

Lucy Patton

THE younger son of Eve Howells, the "domineering" teacher who was battered to death by her son after subjecting the boys to years of abuse, was granted leave to appeal yesterday against his conviction for taking part in the murder.

The Court of Appeal said John Howells, aged 17, had grounds for arguing that the judge at his trial at Leeds crown court a year ago had wrongly withdrawn from the jury the question of whether he had acted under provocation.

But the appeal judges

refused an application by Mrs Howells's husband, David, aged 49, for leave to challenge his murder conviction, for which he is serving a life sentence. He was said to have incited his sons to carrying out the killing.

The elder son, Glenn, aged 18, who had admitted repeatedly striking his mother with a stone mason's hammer, made no attempt to appeal. He and his brother, who were 15 and 14 at the time of the murder in August 1995, were ordered to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure.

The jury had heard that Glenn was the killer, with his brother playing a "lesser but crucial" role, and their father

the instigator. Mr Howells, of Huddersfield, had claimed he was unaware of his sons' plot to kill their mother, a history and religious education teacher.

Glenn admitted that he snapped after a verbal attack from his mother and struck her repeatedly with the hammer.

John admitted having disposed of the weapon.

Yesterday Mr Howells's lawyers claimed that the trial judge, Mr Justice Allott, had wrongly allowed the jury to hear evidence of a tape recording made secretly of a conversation between the three, in which damaging admissions were made, when

the father was visiting his sons in a cell.

The recording was made in breach of Police and Criminal Evidence Act rules and the European Convention on Human Rights, the lawyers argued.

But Lord Justice Swinton Thomas, sitting with Mr Justice Hidden and Mr Justice Auld, said the judge was right to admit the evidence.

In John Howells's case, it was arguable that the judge should have left the issue of provocation to the jury, although this point would not necessarily render his conviction unsafe.

The appeal will be heard this year.

Terms of endearment put people off, opinion survey finds

Emily Sheffield

TRADSMEN, police officers, dentists and shop assistants are warned. Colloquial pet names such as "love", "duck" and "dear" can be considered offensive and politically incorrect, according to a survey published yesterday.

In particular, young women find the expression "love" when used by men to be patronising, rude and sexist.

However, they are not the only ones to complain. Out of 1,000 adults surveyed, almost half said they dislike being called "dear" by

people they meet on a more formal basis - such as dentists, receptionists, tradesmen and shop assistants.

But it is in the office that over-familiarity is really disliked, as 47 per cent said they object to their boss using pet names. This is closely followed by 46 per cent who object to being addressed as "love" by police officers.

According to the poll carried out by NOP Solutions for Bella magazine, women are more likely to dislike terms of endearment than men. Some 63 per cent of 16- to 24-year-olds are offended by tradesmen who call them "love", compared

with just 36 per cent of over 65s.

But it is not all bad news for those who are fond of the odd affectionate colloquialism. The survey found 72 per cent are happy with carers and nurses addressing them with pet names, and 60 per cent do not mind members of the public - such as a passer-by asking directions - addressing them as "flower", "pet" or "duck".

People's reactions to pet names differ so much, some companies and organisations have been forced to either ban or discourage their use. At King's Mill hospital in Sutton-in-Ash-

field, Nottinghamshire, staff have been warned to avoid using pet names with patients.

"To address patients by anything other than their full title could be regarded as patronising," explained spokeswoman Lynn Walder. "The big thing up here is 'duck', but not everyone likes it and we need to respect that. I would imagine most hospitals in northern England adopt this strategy."

Some language experts, however, think that it is wrong to ban such terms of endearment, as they consider them part of our cultural heritage.

The new commercial environment of TV has made the issues of what's being directed at children, who is supplying it and who is setting the boundaries, especially critical.

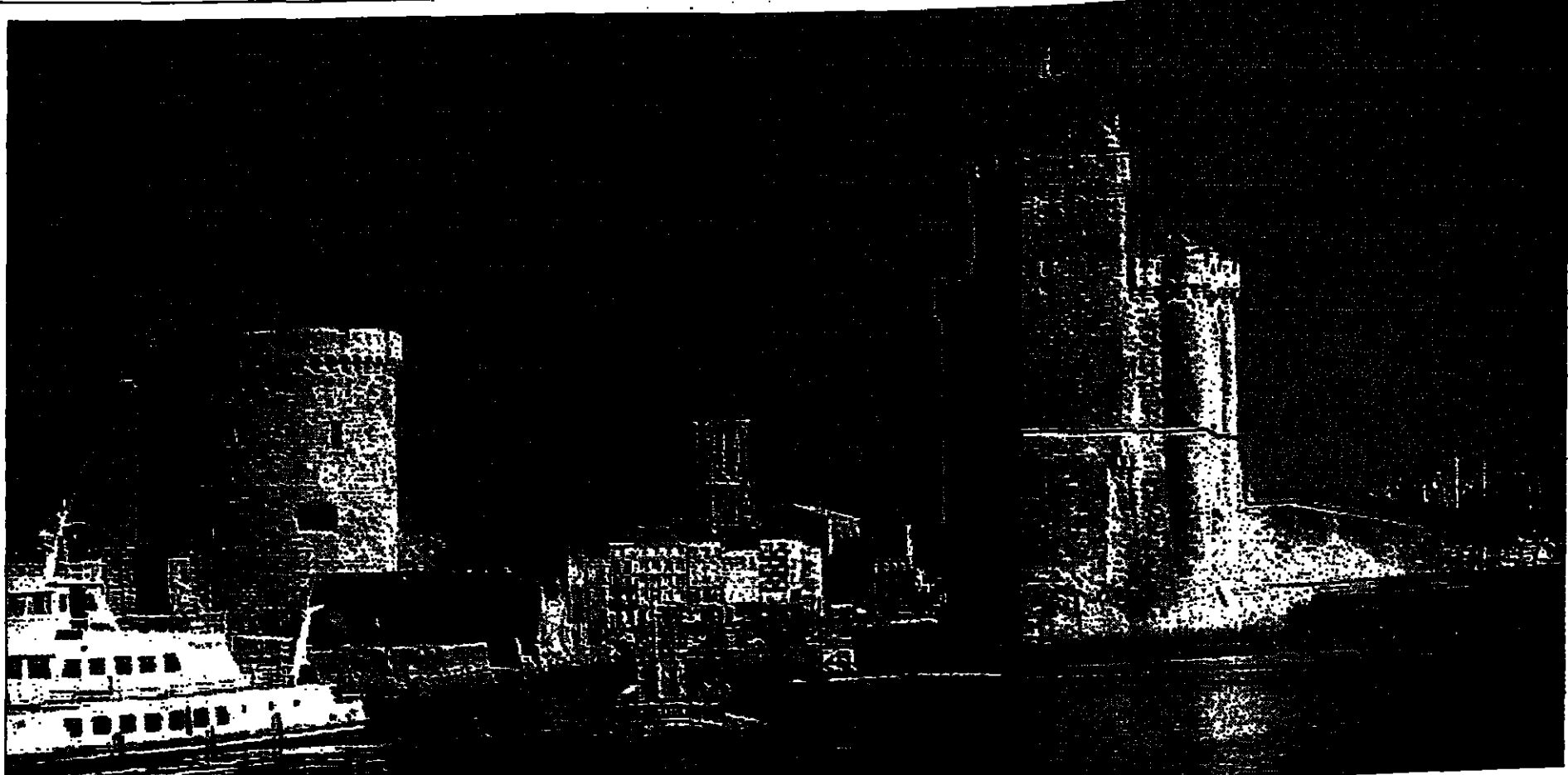
Ros Coward on the effect of TV on children

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6 WORLD NEWS

France honours city that changed history

La Rochelle will be the focus of a national celebration of the 1598 Edict of Nantes which allowed a degree of religious tolerance, writes **Paul Webster**



The entrance to the old port of La Rochelle. During the 16th century 90 per cent of the city's population was Calvinist, now only about 2 per cent are

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT ESTALL

THE Protestant church in this Atlantic port scarred by the Reformation wars was once an ornate Catholic monastery. Today the austerity of the dark wood panelled walls is broken only by a carved pulpit in the eastern wall. A room which served as the vestry, until the Catholic Church's possessions were seized after the Revolution, gives on to a sparsely furnished Protestant museum where exhibits are displayed with an order and modesty that reflect the tenets of the French reformer Jean Calvin.

For the next few weeks La Rochelle, once the most Protestant of cities, will be at the centre of national commemorations of Henri IV's 1598 Edict of Nantes, which authorised limited religious freedom. The document's 400th anniversary has already prompted books on the Protestant legacy, inspired a chain of conferences, and won a solemn recognition by President Jacques Chirac, a Catholic, of protestantism's contribution to the making of modern France.

The edict, approved by an

itinerant king in a Catholic city, provided little more than an armistice after 40 years of merciless persecution of a minority faith. It was an apparent act of tolerance by a ruler who converted from Calvinism to obtain the crown. Four centuries later it appears to have fulfilled the prophesies that the Huguenot noblemen had signed away

The edict provided little more than an armistice after 40 years of persecution

their church's future by not sticking to their demand for total equality, implicitly inviting a new phase of persecution.

A million French claim membership of Protestant Churches, including the Methodist and Baptist. Of these, 250,000 Lutherans, mostly in Alsace, and 600,000 Calvinists are members of the Fédération Protestante de France.

High profile Calvinists, such as the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, and his Socialist predecessor, Michel Rocard, give the deceptive impression of a dynamic faith linked to business leaders such as the Peugeot family, the Seydoux dynasty, which financed the Catholic president François Mitterrand's rise to power, and Louis Schweitzer, the Renault chairman.

La Rochelle, whose population was 90 per cent Calvinist in the 16th century, gives a more realistic view of the extent of today's fidelity and influence. One of four 16th-century Protestant sanctuaries, it is part of a scattered community that includes areas of the south and centre of France and recent concentrations around Paris and Lille.

But Olga de Saint-Affrique, the museum's curator, was embarrassed to say how many were practising Calvinists in a city whose defiance of Catholic armies showed that Calvin's teachings were once worth dying for.

"Numbers? That is the question we don't like being asked," she said. "The estimate is 2,000, of

which only about 100 regularly attend services." Considering that La Rochelle has a population of 100,000, today's fidelity to Calvin is poor recognition of the defence of protestantism that nearly brought England to war with France during a 1627 siege by Cardinal de Richelieu's army.

More than 20,000 inhabitants died of starvation. Murders and mass expulsions followed Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. But the faith was kept alive, despite incredible suffering, by an underground Church finally given equal rights of worship after the Revolution.

The tendency these days to shrug off a Protestant background is partly due to its reputation for sanctimonious rigour compared to the exaggerated ideas of exuberant Catholicism and anything goes atheism.

Mr Jospin was aware of this when he bought an open-top sports saloon during his election campaign in his efforts to contradict his reputation as a joyless sportsman. A burden also carried by De Gaulle's prime minister, Maurice Couve de Murville,

Supposed Protestant asceticism and conformity were more convincingly belied by France's two best-known 20th-century Protestants, the writers André Gide and Jean-Paul Sartre, whose lifestyles provide another theme for the current plethora of celebrations.

As well as re-examining religious clichés, literary analyses should correct the Rouart believed that without protestantism France wouldn't be an industrial power

imbalance by which the Protestant contribution to France's political, social and cultural make-up has been obscured by the focus on other minority religions, such as Judaism and Islam. But having been underestimated for so long, Protestants may now wonder if the pendulum may swing the other way.

The historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie caused a

stir by claiming that revolt against Catholic ideas was fundamental to the creation of the modern French left, not least because of its unshakeable defence of a secular republic.

The writer and literary critic Jean-Marie Rouart believed that without protestantism France wouldn't be an industrial power

Perhaps so, except that protestantism has been no guarantee of good government. Among the odd facts thrown up by the new interest in Calvin is that the 1879 ministerial cabinet headed by William Waddington had a Protestant majority. Neither reasonable nor rigorous, the five warring Protestant ministers quickly went the same way as scores of Catholic and agnostic Third Republic rivals.



Henri IV, who converted from Calvinism to win the crown, authorised some religious freedom by the Edict of Nantes

Cook seeks end to Kosovo crisis

Ian Black in London and Martin Walker in Brussels

ROBIN Cook, the Foreign Secretary, is to meet the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, in Belgrade tomorrow to express European Union concern about the Kosovo crisis and warn of unspecified consequences if the crackdown does not end.

Britain, which holds the presidency of the EU, has expressed member states' "unreserved condemnation" of the violence that left more than 20 dead at the weekend. In the Kosovo capital, Pristina, on Monday, Serbian police armed with tear-gas, water cannon and clubs waded into thousands of protesters outraged at the killings.

Mr Cook, who had planned to visit Bosnia today for talks in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, wants to go to Belgrade to underline EU concern about what many feel is the next Balkan flashpoint.

The EU sternly condemned the violence in Kosovo again yesterday, but its political committee came up with no substantive proposals to meet



Yesterday's funeral for ethnic Albanians killed at the weekend PHOTOGRAPH: DARKO VOJNOVIC

the accusations of an angry public demonstration in Brussels where posters accused Europe of "failing the test of Kosovo".

The EU foreign affairs commissioner, Hans Van Den Broek, has threatened to put the matter to the United

Nations Security Council, as the international body could impose sanctions. But Yugoslavia is already subject to sanctions stemming from the war in Bosnia. And with France dubious about imposing any new measures on Belgrade — whose

co-operation is still required to maintain the fragile peace in Bosnia — any European agreement on a tough new initiative looks elusive. The British presidency of the EU leaves Mr Cook with the responsibility of crafting a European consensus and

persuading President Milosevic to drop his insistence that Kosovo is an internal Serbian affair and to accept a European role.

The EU, which urges a restoration of pre-1989 autonomy rather than independence for Kosovo, has limited influence over Serbia and in Kosovo itself.

The EU's main decision yesterday, apart from approving Mr Cook's hastily arranged trip, was to insist that EU policy be co-ordinated with other international bodies — like the UN and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) — and with Russia and the United States.

In Bosnia today Mr Cook will give an upbeat message to the Serb minority, whose new government has vowed to support the 1995 Dayton peace treaty which ended the Bosnian war.

He will deliver a speech in Banja Luka to Republika Srpska parliamentarians who last month elected Milorad Dodik as prime minister. Britain and other Western countries are keen to boost Mr Dodik's standing to improve the chances of moderate Serb candidates in Bosnia's elections in mid-September.

Kohl's rival masters new media politics

Schröder wins hands down on TV as well as at the ballot box, Ian Traynor in Bonn reports

IN HANOVER on Sunday night, Gerhard Schröder worked the television studios relentlessly — a beaming smile, simple soundbites endlessly repeated. Finish from his Lower Saxony election triumph and suddenly looking like a plausible candidate to become Europe's most powerful politician after Germany's general elections in September, Mr Schröder seemed to be appearing on half a dozen television stations simultaneously.

It was a perfectly pitched performance from the first master of Germany's new media democracy — confident and courteous, firm and fair, grateful and graceful. By contrast with the easy Schröder charm, Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his lieutenants appeared uncomfortable and stiff.

Not only at the ballot box, but in the first television contest of the general election campaign, Mr Schröder routed his opponents.

Suddenly, as a result of Sunday night, there is a palpable air of expectancy and excitement in Bonn washing away the torpor that had settled over German politics.

Mr Schröder not only won, everyone else lost hugely. The liberal FDP, in government in Bonn, failed to muster enough votes to get into the Hanover parliament; the Greens lost votes on their 1994 performance and failed to qualify for a coalition; Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democratic Party sank to its lowest share of the state vote for two generations despite his heavy personal investment in the campaign; and Oskar Lafontaine, the leader of Mr Schröder's Social Democratic Party (SPD) and his rival for the party's chancellorship nomination, was presented with a stunning *fait accompli* and had to forfeit his ambition to become chancellor.

Instantly, via the television, Mr Schröder laid out his electoral wars in brief Blairite phrases over and over again. "The new centre", "moder-

nity", "social responsibility", "alliance for jobs and education", "no divisive campaign": such are the bare essentials of the Schröder message.

Party strategists are beavering away putting flesh on the bones of the slogans. The election manifesto is almost complete and will be put to a special Social Democratic congress next month.

But Mr Schröder has little time for the party he joined 35 years ago. Of more interest were the prompt congratulations from two of the biggest names in German industry, Ferdinand Piech, the boss of Volkswagen, and Mark Woessner, the head of Bertelsmann, Europe's biggest media conglomerate.



Gerhard Schröder: beaming smile and ready soundbites make him media-friendly

SPD policy resolutions would "need to be corrected if they are worthless", the candidate stated. With reference to his party's economic policy, he said: "Plodding on in the same old boots is out of step with reality."

Mr Schröder's strategy is already plain — to ignore the party when necessary and take the mainline to the public via the television screen.

The German media adore Mr Schröder, who is always available, always accessible.

Mr Schröder's mastery of the medium ensures that he will be fought on television and focused on personalities in a way that Germany has never experienced.

In the age of the floating voter and growing abstention, the game plan is to capture the "new centre" — middle-class, middle-aged, middle Germany.

It is an inclusive strategy aimed at stealing some of Mr Kohl's traditional support while accusing the chancellor of seeking to divide Germany.

Mr Schröder sees himself as a can-do senior executive, animated not by political theorising but by results and problem-solving.

His biggest problem may turn out to be his own party, which is wary of the powerful, hungry nominee. There is here the relationship between Mr Schröder and Mr Lafontaine, who has worked

instilling discipline and confidence in the notoriously fractious and unruly SPD.

Despite the increasingly Blairite message and methods of the Schröder camp, the big difference between the British and Lower Saxon prime ministers is that Mr Schröder does not control his party.

If the Schröder-Lafontaine tandem functions smoothly, however, Mr Lafontaine can probably deliver the party behind the first realistic contender for deposing Mr Kohl from his 18-year stint as chancellor while Mr Schröder concentrates on extending his party's appeal beyond traditional SPD voters.

Mr Kohl camp complains that Mr Schröder is taking the politics out of German politics. That is an exaggeration. But he has introduced Germany to a new and different kind of politics.

World news in brief

Israel planes fire rockets at Hizbullah posts in Lebanon

ISRAELI planes carried out two raids on suspected positions of pro-Iranian Hizbullah guerrillas in southern Lebanon yesterday after the group attacked an Israeli outpost, witnesses said.

The rocket attacks on the Aqmata area involved two planes and were about 20 minutes apart, they said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

In Jerusalem, the Israeli army released a statement saying that it had attacked

terrorist targets near Jabal Soloud in south Lebanon.

Hizbullah had claimed before the raids that it had attacked an Israeli outpost at Soloud.

Hizbullah guerrillas are fighting to oust Israeli troops, and their local militia allies the South Lebanon Army, from the nine-mile buffer zone which Israel set up in 1985 to protect northern Israeli settlements from attack by Lebanon-based guerrillas. — Reuters, Nabatiyeh.

Ecuador pays El Niño price

Ecuador's finance minister said yesterday the country must spend \$2 billion over the next five to 10 years to repair damage caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon.

The havoc wrought by El Niño has obliged the government to rethink its economic forecasts, he said. — Reuters.

Java hunger strike

Indonesian university students on the island of Java have been on hunger strike for a week demanding government action on the financial crisis, students' groups said yesterday. — Reuters.

Congo executions

A firing squad in the Democratic Republic of the Congo executed 16 criminals yesterday, military sources said. The executions brought to 60 the number of people executed since President Laurent Kabila took power in May. — Reuters.

Fast food raid

Four masked men stole a Ronald McDonald statue from a French McDonald's, police

said yesterday. They wrote an anti-McDonald's message on the terrace of the restaurant near the southern city of Montpellier. — Reuters.

It's a dog's death

A dog sentenced to death by a Panamanian court for having an offensive name has been executed. The dog, named Immi-gration, was shot in the province of Rukwa because its name was deemed insulting to a "highly respected government department". — Reuters.

Brazil mystery find

Brazilian police have discovered six human skulls on a beach in the notoriously corrupt north-eastern state of Alagoas and are investigating links between the find and a police crime-ring, officials said yesterday. — Reuters.

Tourist crime

South African police have arrested a man suspected of murdering two Swedish tourists at an east coast holiday resort, a provincial minister said yesterday. The tourists were found shot dead in a flat in Umhlanga on Saturday. The motive was believed to be robbery. — Reuters.

Fine victory for Athens drivers

THE mayor of Athens, Dimitris Avramopoulos, yesterday promised to refund at least 350 million drachmas (£740,000) worth of parking tickets after a high court ruled it was illegal for private companies to issue fines.

Athenians burned parking tickets outside the city hall to celebrate.

Two years ago, lacking the resources to control parking, Athens and 41 other Greek municipalities allowed private companies to set up controlled areas which included thousands of parking spots. Company employees issued parking tickets, their firms pocketing some of the fine, the rest going to the city.

The court ruled that private companies cannot fine people for using public property. Mr Avramopoulos warned Athenians that from now on parking tickets in controlled areas would be issued by a beefed-up municipal police force. — AP, Athens.

Kenyan theft trial begins

THE trial of four men charged with involvement in Kenya's Goldenberg scandal, a big stumbling block to aid from the International Monetary Fund and foreign donors, began in Nairobi yesterday after years of delay.

Businessman Kamlesh Pathai of Goldenberg International pleaded not guilty to 15 counts including theft, fraud and forgery. Three senior for-

mer government officials, charged with some counts, also pleaded not guilty.

The case, revolving around gold and diamond exports, goes back to 1992. The director of public prosecutions said he would prove that the defendants jointly stole \$8 billion shillings (£58 million at today's exchange rate) from the central bank in 1993. — Reuters, Nairobi.

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Anti-Abacha marchers arrested at Lagos rally

Eniweke Ibagers in Lagos

POLICE in Lagos yesterday arrested 20 people protesting against Nigeria's military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha, witnesses said.

They said those arrested included Oluksa Agbakoba, the leader of United Action for Democracy, who had called for a march to counteract a huge rally in the capital Abuja to press General Abacha to transform himself into a civilian president.

"They were loaded into a police truck and taken away," one witness said. "Agbakoba had a bruised eye."

Earlier, police used tear-gas to disperse the few dozen marchers waving placards who defied an official ban on the protest.

Commonwealth warning cuts little ice

COMMONWEALTH ministers yesterday warned Nigeria to restore democracy later this year or face sanctions, but the statement after talks in London carried little conviction in the face of past tolerance of the military-led government, writes Ian Black.

Britain had wanted to send a Commonwealth mis-

sion to Nigeria, but the group instead laid down a series of "benchmarks" to measure progress towards democracy.

The two-day meeting said only: "The transition process must be seen to command the support of the Nigerian people." It called for "a political environment where people's right to ex-

press their opinion and choose a government can be exercised in a free and unfettered way."

Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth after nine minority rights activists were hanged in 1995. Last year's Edinburgh summit threatened to expel it unless it restored democracy by October.

August dominates politics in Nigeria. The general, who took power in 1993, has not yet said he will stand for the presidency but he has done nothing to discourage those who sling his praises.

Suspicion that the campaign has official backing have been heightened by the pledged participation of many government agencies to ensure the two-day rally in Abuja is a success.

"By now it must be visible to the blind and audible to the deaf that... Abacha is interested in continuing as first citizen," wrote the commentator Gbemiga Ogunleye in the Lagos-based Punch newspaper.

Opposition groups and pro-democracy campaigners have long dismissed Gen Abacha's promise to restore democracy as a ruse to keep hold of power. — Reuters

Zimbabwean strikers ignore Mugabe threat

Andrew Meldrum in Harare

ZIMBABWE was shut yesterday as trade unions went ahead with a national anti-tax strike despite threats from the president, Robert Mugabe.

Work stopped at factories, shops and most businesses countrywide on the first day of the two-day strike called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

Although there were fears of violence after three days of food riots in January left nine people dead, yesterday's strike was peaceful.

The unions want the government to revoke tax increases and to control rising food prices, which economists say have climbed by 40 per cent this year.

Declaring the strike illegal, ministers threatened "drastic and punitive action" against all strikers — and employers who permitted work to stop.

"We are only doing what



Robert Mugabe. Accusing the unions of playing at politics over tax increases

our members have urged us to do, the rank and file wanted this strike," Mr Tsangirai, the ZCTU secretary-general, said.

Speaking on television on Monday, Mr Mugabe said: "I no longer consider the ZCTU a labour movement, it is an opposition party."

He added: "They are playing politics. They cannot try to be

government and say no to this tax or yes to that tax. They should bargain with their employers for higher wages."

But Mr Tsangirai denied the ZCTU was overstepping the mark, saying: "These are economic issues that affect our workers. We want to see responsible management of the economy. He cannot define the parameters for us."

Racial tension flared on Monday when the minister of industry and commerce, Nathan Shamuyarira, claimed the strike had been masterminded by white industrialists. Mr Mugabe has made similar claims of an "unholy alliance" between the white-dominated business community and black trade unions.

"They were backed by the War Veterans Association of Zimbabwe."

"If the boycott goes ahead we, as the liberators of this country, could very well attack the whites for inciting the boycott," its chairman, Chenjerai Hunzvi, said.

Idi Amin 'exiled to isolated Mecca'

Giles Foden

IDI AMIN, Uganda's former dictator, has been banished from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, after allegedly organising a shipment of arms to northern Uganda, a newspaper reported.

The Saudis, who gave him refuge after he was toppled by a Tanzanian invasion in 1979, are thought to have limited his movements to the isolated holy city of Mecca.

A Jeddah-based source told the Ugandan Monitor newspaper that Mr Amin had approached an Italian shipping company, Messina and Co.

"He told the shippers that he wanted them to send an urgent consignment to his friends in northern Uganda," the source is quoted as saying. But the company is thought to have become suspicious and backed out of the deal.

It is unclear how Mr Amin, who has been living on a monthly stipend of 5,000 riyals (about \$850) from the Saudi government, would have been able to buy arms.

Mr Amin found refuge in Saudi Arabia as a consequence of his friendship with the now deceased King Faisal, one of a number of Arab leaders — including Libya's Colonel Gaddafi — who gave him financial and military support.

But Mr Amin's presence is thought to be an embarrassment to King Fahd, who is bound to honour his predecessor's offer of hospitality.

In cosmopolitan Jeddah, Mr Amin led a comfortable life, complete with a swimming pool and a Chevrolet Caprice car. His exile to Mecca — a spartan and devout city — can only be seen as a punishment.

Amin's sidelick, G2 page 4

Egypt opens tombs and pyramids



An Egyptian points to an inscription in the Giza tomb of Akhetmehu, a chief of justice of Nekhen city and priest of the goddess Maat. The tomb is one of 10 built for nobles and aides to the pharaohs of the 4th and 5th dynasties, who ruled over 4,000 years ago, and three queens' pyramids that were opened to the public yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: MOHAMMED AL-SHAY

Rift denied as Jordan talks

Martin Kettle in Washington

BILL Clinton's long-time friend and associate Vernon Jordan gave evidence about his role in the Monica Lewinsky affair yesterday amid high-level denials of any disparity between the two men's accounts.

Mr Jordan, a Washington lawyer and power-broker, is the most important witness to give evidence so far about whether President Clinton committed or encouraged perjury about his relationship with Ms Lewinsky.

Mr Jordan has admitted that he helped Mr Lewinsky to find a job in 1997 but denies that it was part of any effort to keep the former White House intern from revealing an affair with the president.

Mr Jordan, aged 62, refused to answer questions from a crush of reporters and camera crews as he arrived at the Washington federal court building in answer to a subpoena from the independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr.

His lawyer, William Hundley, later told reporters that his client was feeling "fine. Cool. He's done it before."

Asked about media specula-

Clinton's close friend takes the stand to answer questions about his role in the Lewinsky affair

tion that Mr Jordan might be seeking to put distance between his own and Mr Clinton's versions of the affair, Mr Hundley said: "There is no rift."

The White House issued a similar message. When the presidential spokesman, Mike McCurry, was asked whether Mr Jordan's evidence would help Mr Clinton, he replied: "Absolutely." Another White House source said later: "Vernon's not for turning."

Mr McCurry said earlier this week that Mr Jordan and Mr Clinton were "very good friends" and remained so. "I think they look forward to the day when they can be less circumspect with each other."

Mr Jordan has previously been quizzed by Mr Starr over allegations that he found a job for Webster Hubbell, a friend of Mr Clinton's, with

the cosmetics firm Revlon after the Whitewater affair.

When the Lewinsky scandal broke in January, Mr Jordan, who is a director of Revlon, made a brief public statement saying that he had helped Ms Lewinsky to find work with the company. He said he would answer Mr Starr's questions "directly, completely and truthfully."

Meanwhile, Mr Starr had fresh subpoenas sent to Mr Clinton's close adviser Bruce Lindsey, who first gave evidence last week, and to the president's secretary, Betty Currie, who authorised Ms Lewinsky's 37 visits to the White House and who also testified last month.

No date has been set for Ms Lewinsky's much discussed evidence. Her lawyer, William Ginsburg, said yesterday that he believes she was alone "a couple of times" with Mr Clinton in the Oval Office, but "being alone doesn't mean they had a relationship."

He said her visits to the White House after she left to work at the Pentagon in 1996 were mostly work related and to see other people — there was neither time nor privacy for any "salacious event" to have occurred during the two meetings.



President Clinton's golf partner and friend Vernon Jordan, left, arrives at the federal court in Washington yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: BRIAN DIGGS

Saddam holds all the front pages in Iraq

Julian Borger finds Baghdad's newspapers rigidly loyal and its journalists unsurprisingly cowed

FROM his editor's chair, Salah al-Muktar can view 150 television channels from around the globe. Nothing happens in the Middle East without him seeing it from half a dozen angles and hearing it in a jumble of competing languages.

But for all this rich and varied input, Al-Jumhuriya (The Republic) produces the same daily diet of official communiqué and propaganda. Like Iraq's four other rigidly loyal newspapers, its principal function is to reprint the words of Saddam Hussein and his Supreme Command Council without spelling or punctuation errors. Mistakes can cost not just careers but years in prison as well.

For Mr Muktar, who has survived five years in his post, al-Jumhuriya's relentless consistency is a source not of journalistic shame but of patriotic pride.

"What do you do during a time of war — give everyone the right to talk or unite for survival?"

"I'm sure that Britain declared an alert during the war. The law and constitution were put aside. Well, we are subjected not to an ordinary war. In Iraq we are subjected to a genocidal plan."

In these conditions, Mr Muktar argued, with sanctions still in place, the economy far beyond collapse and a substantial hostile military force in the Gulf poised for

attack, it was irrelevant to quibble about press freedom.

"Human rights are a minor issue for us. We are struggling to survive. My mother died two days ago of a stroke. If I had medicine maybe she would be alive now. So don't talk to me about human rights. Human rights are a joke."

Immediately after the 1991 Gulf war, Mr Muktar left his job as assistant secretary-general of the Arab League in protest at its anti-Iraqi stand and returned to Baghdad to edit al-Jumhuriya. A photograph behind his chair shows him being congratulated by a broadly smiling President Saddam and his eldest son, Uday.

Before the conflict, al-Jumhuriya printed 400,000 broadsheet copies each day. The paper is now a tabloid with a print-run of 15,000. The five daily papers take it in turns to produce a broadsheet once a week, "to keep up our faith and hope — just to keep our

voice in the world," Mr Muktar said.

It was "not usual", he said, to receive direct instructions from ministers and national editors met only occasionally to discuss production problems. Despite this apparent lack of co-ordination, however, the five dailies tend to look remarkably alike.

The differences are mostly to be found inside Al-Iraq, produced by loyal Kurds, includes extracts of Kurdish literature (translated into Arabic). Al-Thawra (The Revolution) concentrates on the views of the ruling Ba'ath party. Al-Qadisiyah focuses on the army.

Only Babil (Babylon) is allowed to print digests of the foreign press and has a letters page which allows mild criticism. In recent months it has also launched a fierce attack on the policies of the foreign minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf.

The paper owes its outspokenness not to journalistic courage, but to the fact that it is owned by Uday Hussein.

Uday, aged 33, also owns Shabab (Youth) TV, the only private station in Iraq. He is the chairman of the writers' and journalists' association, despite having no experience in either profession.

Uday's brooding presence behind Babil's masthead adds an extra threat of random violence. He has a reputation for losing his temper and taking it out on his employees. He shot his chief bodyguard in a fit of rage in 1993.

Among Iraq's subdued press corps, Babil journalists, not surprisingly, have the reputation for being quieter than most. The newspaper's editor, Salman al-Shahad, agreed to an interview but at the appointed hour his secretary answered his phone to say he was unavailable, having suddenly fallen ill.

India's election results unleash race for power

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

INDIA'S Congress party attempted an act of political alchemy yesterday, seeking partners for a coalition that could deny power to the victors in general elections. The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP and 11 allied parties took 245 seats in India's parliament, according to results in all but two seats yesterday. The Congress's Sonia Gandhi logged 35,000 miles on the campaign trail to help her family's party and its allies to 166 seats, while the ruling United Front of regional and leftwing parties was reduced to 85 seats. With the BJP coalition falling 27 seats short of an outright majority, the Congress was un-

willing to recognise defeat.

"The BJP and its allies have been mightily rejected by the voters," Ghulam Nabi Azad, the party's general secretary, said. "In my opinion, the Congress party and the United Front will build the new government."

Setting aside ideology and historic resentments, the two largest forces in the United Front alliance, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the lower castes' champion, the Samajwadi Party, pledged to back a Congress-led government.

It will fall to India's president, K R Narayanan, to make the hard choices before March 15 when the lower house of parliament, or Lok Sabha, reconvenes. Though its parameters are unknown one thing is certain: India's

next government will emerge only after feverish machinations, with alliances broken and remade, and is unlikely to last a full five years.

It is also unlikely to fulfill its manifesto promises for fear of alienating parties in coalitions that will stretch to a dozen members. Bombay's stock markets reacted with dismay to the prospect of further instability yesterday.

The losers' enfeebled alliance. As supporters watched results trickle in, the party's general secretary, M Venkaiah Naidu, insisted the BJP side could rally enough supporters to govern.

"We are in touch with like-minded persons even outside the BJP and allies," he said.

Leader comment, page 9

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE Diary postbag bulges with letters from worried fans of Helen Britton, the android MP for Peterborough. "We have heard nothing for weeks, and are concerned," writes one, "lest a fault in her positronic circuitry has sent her veering wildly off message." Put your mind at rest. Only last week Helen had her 10-minute rule bill on "home zones" — streets with extra-low speed limits — published, and issued a press release to celebrate. "I have received support and eagerness to create home zones from people all over the country," says Helen, who has now gone several weeks without being the victim of petty crime on a train. "People are seeing this Bill as a beacon of hope." Hurrah! Hurrah! Helen is a glimmering beacon herself to all who value independent thinkers on the backbenches, and we wish her and her bill all the best.

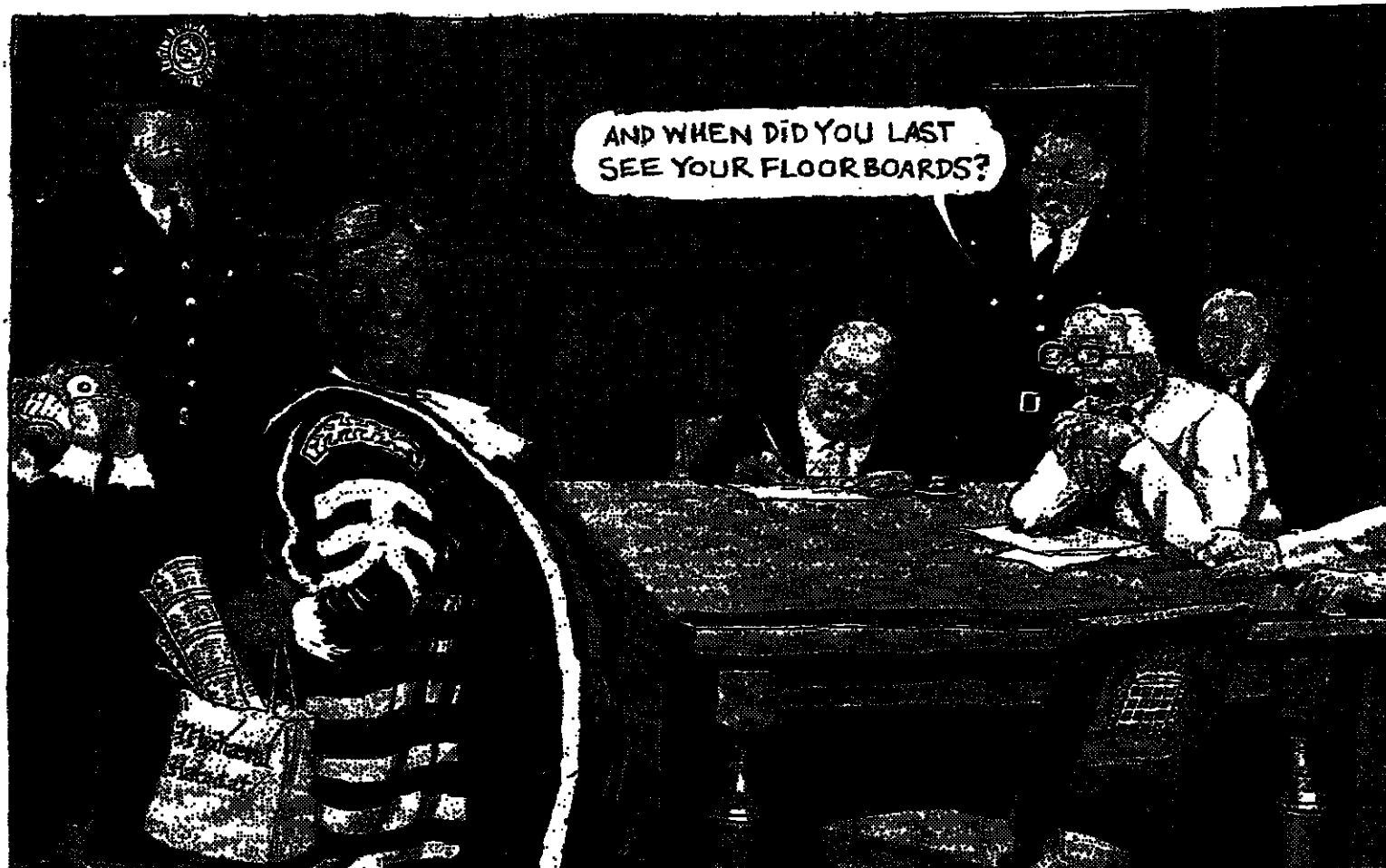
ON Monday night, some time after this page went to press, Rosemary Rafter returned our phonecall. Paperback is eager to make it clear that she was not avoiding the Diary, and insists that her new post as chairman of the free speech organisation Article 19 is quite compatible with her salaried job, as chief executive writer on Rupert Murdoch's Times. The words "interest", "conflict" and "of" do not occur to her, in any order. However, there are rumours that Rupert, disturbed by her new appointment, is thinking of replacing Rosemary with a pair of journalists from a friendly newspaper in Beijing. This would be a grave error. Has Rupert never heard the ancient law "two wrongs don't make a right"?

SPREADING Rupert, the Diary has had a brainwave which would allow him to establish his credentials as a media pluralist, and also to placate his Chinese friends. Rupert must buy the Morning Star. The survival of the paper, which by large supports the regime in Beijing, is threatened by a strike, and a small investment would allow him to rescue it. "I don't comment on such matters," says my old friend Sir Tim Bell, former chief toilet spokesman to Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber, who now does a bit of PR for the mogul. "I'm only one of Mr Murdoch's advisers." Too modest, Tim. We know you can swing it.

THE T&GWTU's 75th birthday party in London on Sunday was graced by New Labour's finest. The Chancellor turned up in person, and gave a brilliant, rousing left-wing speech (it's Red Gordon for Tribes, rallies and unions: Iron Gordon at the CBI), even claiming to have joined the party at Rosyth dockyard. Mr Tony, never at his most relaxed with unions, could only make it on video, and for himself to deliver a warm tribute to Bill Morris's stewardship. Only two years ago, Mr T's people were briefing everyone in sight that he wanted Mr Morris replaced by his moderniser challenger Jack Dromey (Harriet Harman's old man). Is power affecting his memory?

ASPIN doctor is sought in London, N17, to help Christian Gross. The Swiss coach of Tottenham Hotspur (the club with Britain's highest concentration of Jewish supporters) requires assistance with his post-match analyses. "Too many times," he said, after Sunday's game, "he looks for the final solution (when he should play the final pass)." Mr Gross was speaking of David Gilmour. Thanks be to God it wasn't Jürgen Klinsmann.

IT'S FOR A FRINGE AT GRANADA WHO HAS LOST HIS SHIRT. A Granada TV programme about child labour working there. The resulting programme led M&S to sue for libel, insisting that the programme meant that Britain's leading retailer knew of these abuses. Granada TV insists it has never believed M&S knew and never intended its programme to say so. Two years, countless



Do we need such a big cabinet? No: Blair should wield the axe

Jonathan Freedland



LET'S play cabinet reshuffle. Not the usual game of who goes where, but a whole new game — why are they there in the first place? Instead of the summer ritual of a collective job swap, in which ministers trade places, Tony Blair should have a genuine clear-out — changing not just the personnel, but the jobs themselves. Reshaping his cabinet would not only be smart politics, it could also fulfill one of Labour's most intriguing promises: bringing government closer to the lives of real people.

Right now Tony Blair chairs a group of 22 ministers, including himself. It's a large and unwieldy collection, too big for genuine conversation. Think of your own workplace: when was the last time you had a meaningful discussion with 22 people around the table? John Major tried to revive collegiate government and collective decision-making: what he got was civil war. Blair prefers the Thatcher method: consulting one or two colleagues before delivering a *fait accompli* to the full cabinet on a Thursday morning. There is little discussion: ministers rarely chip in with anything beyond their own brief, the whole business barely lasts more than half an hour. Political correspondents are grilling their contacts to discover what was said in cabinet. These days they don't bother.

But if the cabinet as a political institution has lost relevance, individual posts within it have become positively redundant. How many voters in the land — asked to list the 22 tasks essential to the run-

ning of the country — would include the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster among them? How many could guess what such a person is meant to do? Which voters would insist on having a seat at the top table for the President of the Council or the Leader of the Lords? Rather than play musical chairs with this lot in the summer (or, more likely, the autumn), the PM should stop the music — and take half the chairs away. He should learn a lesson from the corporate chiefs whose hearts now beat so close to New Labour's, and streamline.

The Department of Social Security is a good place to start. Everyone expects Mr Blair to axe Harriet Harman; instead he should axe her job. The Government is determined to get people off benefits: why not abolish the department whose sole function is to dole them out? Social security should come instead under Gordon Brown at the Treasury. Everyone knows that Brown is powering welfare reform — that he is the organ-grinder to Harriet Harman's monkey. By taking charge of social security, Brown would be coming clean, admitting that this key project is his.

The Chancellor should wave aside charges of empire-building: such a move makes sound policy sense. The experts have long agreed that tax and benefits should be integrated, so that money brought in and money paid out come under one roof. The Treasury already supervises the Inland Revenue; benefits should be handled the same way. Best of all, Harriet Harman could be moved on with no need for anything so crude as a sack-

A similarly neat solution awaits Mr Blair's most accident-prone cabinet colleague, his mentor Derry Irvine. The Lord Chancellor's office should be hived as an absurd relic of Britain's pre-democratic era: an unelected figure with a commanding role in all three branches of government — judiciary, legislature and executive. A new Department of Justice is needed, one better suited to overseeing the Human Rights Act than the penally-minded Home Office, and better placed to nominate senior judges than the whims of a single Lord Chancellor. As an unelected peer, Lord Irvine would be ineligible for the job. Fit, that. But, as with Ms Harman, the good Cardinal's career-change could be presented as nothing personal.

NEXT the cabinet downsizer should turn to the Ministry of Defence. In the post-cold-war world, there can be scant case for the armed services retaining their own, high spending department. Rather, as last month's Gulf crisis illustrated, diplomacy and force work best when they work together. The MoD should be absorbed into the Foreign Office, along with International Development (which used to be there anyway). Just as police answer to the Home Office, troops should take their orders from the FO. Military spending would be driven less by institutional self-preservation, and more by foreign policy.

It needn't stop there. If devotion works, what need will there be for separate Welsh and Scottish offices? If a deal is struck in May, maybe the Northern Ireland Office could wither away, replaced by self-

long learning, perhaps Culture and Education should no longer occupy separate addresses. In a global economy, trade might sit more comfortably in a Foreign Office watching out for Britain's relations with the world.

What could emerge is a handful of mega-ministries, each one charged with shaking off the narrow departmentalitis of old, and seeing society not in administrative chunks but as an interconnected whole. Such an approach would echo our own lives: we know that nothing happens in neat little departments, so why should policy-making? Take the farmer's child who needs a bus to get to his village school: is that a problem for Transport, Agriculture or Education? The answer is all three — just the job for a wide-ranging Rural Affairs ministry, as coveted by Jack Cunningham. Two more changes are required to make all this work. The first is a beefed-up Prime Minister's department, which could cohere the efforts of these mighty ministries. Number 10 currently has a meagre staff of its own, and relies on personal pressure more than systemic efficiency to drive through its programme. The second need is for a proper system of parliamentary scrutiny, to ensure these newly-muscle executive departments behave. That can only come from a battery of powerful committees, independent of the government — and that means an elected second chamber.

If Tony Blair did all that, government in Britain would work better. Or he could save himself the aggravation and spend the summer the same way as all his predecessors — reshuffling the pack.

Women to blame again

Polly Toynbee



HERE comes the backlash against this dangerously progressive promise of more child care — a threat to the sanctity of family life, seducing housewives away from the hearth and out to work. What was remarkable about the paean of praise for housewives in yesterday's Daily Mail was that it was written by a keen Blair loyalist. Denis MacShane MP is an impatient backbencher, an intelligent moderniser. Has he been over-eager to curry favour this time, or is this the sort of message (in this sort of prose) his masters genuinely want to send out?

This is his hymn to housewives: "Why do we hear nothing about the unsung heroines of modern Britain? To read the left wing and liberal press the only women who count are those who go out to work. Even the worst housewife itself has become almost a term of abuse in some quarters. They idolise women like 'Superwoman' Nicola Horlick... Isn't it time we did something for the mothers who stay at home to help bring up their children? These are the home-makers, the family-shapers and the marriage-savers that deserve all the support we politicians can summon up." If I quote much more of this stuff, dear reader, you might throw up.

However, you'll have to read a bit more to understand what he's asking for, which happens to be exactly what the Daily Mail called for in their leader last week, while castigating Blair's "U-turn" on restoring money to lone parents: "The unsung heroines keeping Britain together by staying at home should be rewarded by allowing them to transfer their tax allowances to their partners. In other words, the state should pay out a universal subsidy for all mothers who want to stay at home by allowing their husbands to draw a double personal tax allowance in his breadwinning pay packet. That would cost some £2.5 billion. MacShane does not expect it in this budget, but hopes it will be the next initiative."

That would be a great deal of money to spend, and much of it would go to better-off families. Why, I asked MacShane, is he advocating this very expensive hand-out that has no particular social benefit? For mixed reasons, both cynical and sincere.

FIRST the cynical. The political game, he says, is to head off the Tories at the pass and occupy the family ground. The family is their next big theme — William Hague signalled it in a recent speech. But what, I asked, is all this about? You have just won a stunning election victory, the opposition is wiped out, the people support you, the world is your oyster. So why don't you seize the moment to get out there and do what you actually believe? Ah, he replies, the truth is we all fear the last election was a mercurial mood shift, a Diana-quake, and next election the fickle spirit of the times could change back just as fast. He makes them sound like lottery winners who don't dare cash the money. Worse, like leaders who don't dare lead. What's to be done if they still have to address the public in what amounts to a weird parody of tabloid bigotry?

For the times really have changed. Labour won because they represented the modern world and not John Major's imaginary realm of splinters on bikes and warm beer. The greatest social change that has come among women, their lives and expectations. That was the symbolism of getting so many women into parliament. So is the traditional family really a useful rallying cry? Here MacShane grows sincere. He worries the party isn't doing anything to shore

up the two-parent family as a social unit. What really worries him, he says, is the plight of unemployed males in his Rotherham constituency. Single parenthood worries him, lying at the heart of all our problems.

We wouldn't need to build on the green belt if there weren't so many single households. We wouldn't need to put old people into nursing homes if mothers at home would only take them in.

So there you have it — the same old story. Women are to blame for everything, including the loss of coal and steel. This is what "family" policy always boils down to. Praise of housewives is only code for sending women home to do the things no one else wants to do — certainly not male MPs.

Is this that other voice of the Government — always trying to have it both ways? Or is it just the blather of one over-anxious wannabe MP second-guessing his Prime Minister and getting it wrong. But a serious argument lies at the heart of this. What is the state's attitude towards women working? Deeply confused.

In 1990 wives got separate taxation, a huge new incentive to work. It gave two earner households an average extra £1,000. Was that fair, since two earner households are mainly the better off? If you had £1,000 to give families is that where you would put the money?

Next problem: since the great majority of mothers of school age children now work, why do we regard the wives of unemployed men on benefit as "dependents" with no obligation to seek work themselves? An anachronism, surely.

Next: Why do we regard lone mothers on benefit with



If I quote much more of this stuff, dear reader, you might throw up

school age children as free to choose whether to work or not. If jobs are available? Why is a mother of a 14-year-old entitled to choose a life on benefit, when a (possibly) budding rock star of 18 can't?

Next: if you are tempted to give married mothers a bonus to stay at home and care for their children, how could you deny that same bonus to the million lone parents who stay home? But aren't we urging them to work? Anyway, what exactly do housewives do all day when their children are at school that is so sacred? I'm all for choice, but equally for all.

You may have different answers to each of these dilemmas, but they all indicate a confusion about what the state thinks of working mothers.

Trying to escape, MacShane turns Orwellian and asks why we are all so obsessed with work anyway? Isn't life about more than that? Well, maybe, but is he opposed to welfare to work? Would he replace the Working Families Tax Credit with a don't-go-to-work bonus? I doubt it. The work ethic is deep within us all.

We may wish work were not so important — but it is. Most people choose to work when they can, even at low-paid dull jobs. It signifies social worth and membership of the wider society. Yes, value can be found in other things but not easily for most of us. Ask the men in Rotherham why they aren't happy househusbands. Ask mothers of young children at home why they are the most clinically depressed social group. And no gush about the joys of housewifedom from anyone who isn't one.

World in Action's top executive denounces a legal lottery

Buried by libel

Ian McBride

JOURNALISTS tend to believe they can rely on facts, and on their being available for examination in any argument.

Are they? No, given the events of the past week at the High Court, World in Action went to Morocco, having acquired information about child labour being used in a factory which produces Marks and Spencer clothing. They filmed secretly inside the factory, where they also found and filmed M&S clothing being mislabelled as "Made in the UK", and found evidence of child labour working there. The resulting programme led M&S to sue for libel, insisting that the programme meant that Britain's leading retailer knew of these abuses. Granada TV insists it has never believed M&S knew and never intended its programme to say so. Two years, countless

man-hours and hundreds of thousands of pounds were then spent shaking the facts up and down and inside out to produce them as evidence. Journalists and lawyers tramped around Morocco, tracing and chasing. Finally, the simple facts, accepted by Marks and Spencer too, were:

- they worked 49 hours a week;
- they worked for as little as 10p an hour;
- they worked in temperatures of up to 95 degrees;
- more than 7000 garments were wrongly labelled, deliberately, by the M&S supplier, ignorant of the mislabelling. M&S put them on sale to the public.

M&S, we all accept, never knew of any of these abuses. When the programme alerted them, they removed their supplier from the Moroccan factory and withdrew the misla-

belled goods from sale. We expected the evidence underpinning all of those facts to go in front of the jury for six weeks, followed by their consideration of what the meaning of the programme was, whether that meaning was defamatory, and if so had we proved, with the evidence of the facts, the meaning to be true. After all, is the defence to a libel claim...

The jury are the litmus paper for all of us: they look at the full picture, review the evidence and work out what it says about the person suing. All of the evidence will go before 12 ordinary people, best equipped to decide. Until last week. Then a High Court judge started to move all the goalposts. Mr Justice Popplewell took the meaning of our programme, uninformed by any evidence. No, please, we said. We have prepared

for a trial and deserve a full trial. When the jury came back, after a couple of hours, as one observer put it: "You could hear the finest legal brow in England furrowing." Yes, they had reached their own meaning. No it wasn't Granada's

We couldn't ask them a further question to clarify their meaning

meaning, no it wasn't totally M&S's alleged meaning. No, we couldn't ask them a further question to clarify their meaning. It was more M&S's meaning than ours: we would apologise for that meaning, and settle.

The judge's reason for taking this novel course seems at first glance perfectly sensible. Why have a costly six-week trial when

the issue could be decided within days? But this short-cut denies the journalist, the programme maker, the full and fair trial to which they should be entitled. It may deny the opponent the absolute clear vindication to which he could be entitled. It enables both only to leave court quickly, with the issue concluded but not necessarily satisfactorily resolved. The facts remain the facts but may be buried by the result.


We can confidently endorse and encourage the standard of our investigative journalism. But to have to ponder and second-guess our fate in a short-cut route through the libel roulette puts another burden and potential hazard in the way of inquiring, challenging, journalism and the communication of important if uncomfortable, truths to the public.

Ian McBride is managing editor, factual programmes, Granada TV

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A radical in Grub Street

Analysis
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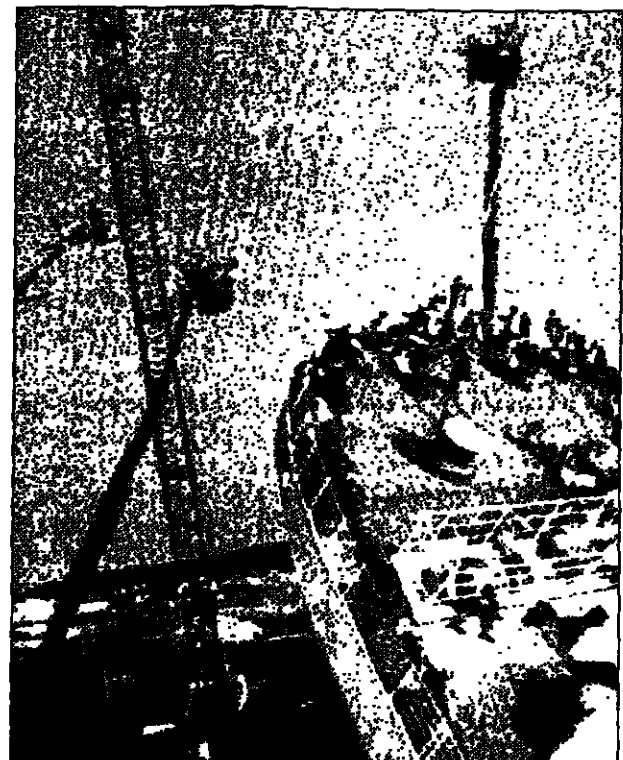
**How to
perfect
the art
of
making
invisible
profits**

Do you

Analysis Film finance



Justice by roulette wheel
8



The Full Monty has grossed \$209m so far. But one of the actors has been paid just £13,500. How come?
Dan Glaister reports

How to perfect the art of making invisible profits

As you rush to the video store to buy The Full Monty, the most successful British movie yet, spare a thought for the poor actors involved. Stripped of the dignity of their labour, forced to get their kit off for money, the serious thespians involved in what is emerging as one of the most profitable films ever made anywhere, are still struggling to make ends met. There was actor Steve Huison at the launch of the video package, bemoaning his lot: "It's that time of the year you've got to break up the soil and get your potatoes in. It's all about growing your own veg and saving money, you know. I'd be a fool if I didn't try to save money."

What can Huison be thinking of? Was he deploying a Chancey Gardeneresque metaphor, in memory of Peter Sellers's performance in Being There, to illustrate the ephemeral nature of fame and the movies? Or was he complaining that he was skint? Asked about the benefits of appearing in such a monumental blockbuster, asked how much his life had changed, Huison went into heavy queen contestant mode: "I've had a good time over the past six months," he said. "I've gone on a lot of free trips and I've met lots of interesting people. There are a lot of pinuses and it's nice to be involved in something that's done so well."

Is that it, Steve? Is that all it means, free trips and getting to meet interesting people? A key player, he was paid a fee of £1,500 per week. Not bad, but not Demi Moore's \$12 million, or Bruce Willis's customary \$20 million. For the nine-week shoot Huison has received just \$13,500. The Full Monty, with a budget of \$3.5 million, has, at latest count, taken \$209 million (£195.7 million) worldwide, yet Huison is not rich, contrary to what many think. "Even my girlfriend's daughter gets tapped up for money at school now, which isn't very pleasant," said Huison. "There's all sorts of rumours. I don't believe anything until I see it in my hand."

He must surely be due a share of the take. In recognition of his hard graft, the film's guilt-stricken producers have come to the same conclusion. A trust fund has been set up to pay a percentage of prof-

its to cast and crew, over and above their flat fee. So Huison's financial future should be secure.

But is it? A simple income versus expenditure calculation would lead to the conclusion that The Full Monty is a goldmine. But, as Huison would say, don't believe it until you see it in your hand. Profit is not necessarily what the big studios want to see. Kudos, glory, Oscars, yes; but profit, well, profit can be tricky. Once a film goes into profit, everybody wants a cut: the taxman, the agents, the managers, the stars, the director. But if it makes a loss...

Take Forrest Gump. The film about the idiot savant with the homilies about chocolate was a huge hit which this week's Variety(1) reveals to be the fifth highest grossing film ever in the United States, with takings of \$289.7 million. But in spite of an astounding box-office performance, Forrest Gump never made a profit, poor chump. But perhaps Forrest Gump was smarter than he made out. Perhaps Forrest Gump realised that if he got into profit, he'd have to start paying people.

"All the money goes to the distributors, the exhibitors, the overheads," says Neil McCartney, editor of Screen Finance. "The Hollywood studios are basically distribution arms with a bit of production attached. They deliberately set things up so distribution swallows up the money."

Film finance is an arcane parallel universe of — as the jargon of the trade puts it, house nuts and back-ends. For an average \$35 million movie, \$18 million will go on prints of the movie and advertising (P&A) costs incurred by distributors to market their product. Then there is the "house nut", the cut of the box-office taken by the exhibitors — the cinema owners. In Britain the house nut is higher than in the US, at around 40 per cent(2). However, the rates vary from film to film, and from exhibitor to exhibitor. With a big American movie, such as Titanic or Forrest Gump, the "house nut" will be lower because exhibitors desperately want to show the film.

With a low-budget British film, The Full Monty, for example, the "house nut" will be higher, as exhibitors demand a higher proportion

of the box-office takings to show a film they judge (or bet) will not attract audiences.

Distributors, exhibitors, marketing: the costs can mount up, adding to the flat payments for film, actors, crew and directors. So how does the lowly actor, director, or whoever, cash in on an unexpected success, the minimum budget no-hoper that goes on to conquer Hollywood and garner Oscar nominations? The answer is the "back-end".

The back-end is jargon for the percentage of profits. In Hollywood, the bigger your name, the bigger your back-end. The little people will find it very difficult to negotiate a back-end: they only come with status. Huison, on £1,500 per week, is lucky to have a retrospective back-end. But then, perhaps he shouldn't moan. Money is the least of it: The Full Monty should at least guarantee that Huison gets more work in the future, roles for which he can command far, far more than £1,500 per week. Who knows, for his next project, he may even get a back-end up front.

Film history is littered with good actors and actresses who failed to negotiate a back-end: there are also a lucky astute few who made sure they got one. Harrison Ford, a rookie carpenter-turned-actor made his debut in a preposterous piece of gothic sci-fi called Star Wars. Ford was paid \$1,000 per week for the two-and-a-half month shoot, plus 0.25 per cent of the film's net profits. Not bad, but not great. Old stager Alec Guinness was slightly cannyer. For appearing in the same film he agreed to take 2 per cent of gross royalties. Sir Alec now claims that he has earned more from

playing the Jedi, Obi-Wan Kenobi, than for all his other film roles put together.

There was a similar tale in Four Weddings And A Funeral, the most successful British film before The Full Monty. Hugh Grant was paid a flat fee of \$62,500 for his work. His co-star, Andie MacDowell, took a profit share, which brought her earnings to \$1.6 million. PolyGram took pity on Grant's plight and made him a gift of \$350,000 of the \$130 million the film took. Aah.

Polygram's largesse may well be echoed by 20th Century Fox, the Murdoch-owned studio behind both Titanic and The Full Monty. Titanic hit a bit of a problem mid-production. As the most expensive movie yet threatened to become rather more expensive than anyone had expected the skipper of the ship made a sacrifice. Director James Cameron waived his fee and his share of the profits to keep the project afloat. This week Titanic became the first film

to take \$1 billion at the box office, so Cameron can expect a bonus. Cameron is now a hot property and the studio will be keen to keep him happy. He can expect a discreet bonus, possibly in keeping with the \$1 million due to the film's two young stars, Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio.

Ultimately film-making is a humbling experience even for the greatest of egos. The industry has its own dynamic and its own system of accounting that involves invisible profits and faceless corporations. There's no branch of accounting as impenetrable as studio spokespersons will gloat over box office receipts: stars — or their agents — will boast of the multi-million dollar deals that have been signed by for mega movies.

But the figures in terms of who gets what remain secret. Lindsay Law, president of Fox Searchlight, the division of 20th Century Fox behind The Full Monty, says: "We wouldn't want our competitors to know; like Warner Brothers wouldn't

disclose either." The \$30-40 million spent on P&A for The Full Monty worldwide will remain a secret, but no doubt it dwarfs its budget, and dents the myth of the film made for peanuts. Ditto the \$110-130 million spent on P&A for Titanic, a hidden cost not included in the mammoth budget.

The Full Monty's unexpected financial success will ensure that it remains in profit no matter how much is spent on advertising. Rupert Murdoch recently claimed(3) that Titanic would make \$100 million dollars profit. Murdoch and Cameron might be in on the figures, but you can bet the ticket-buyers never will be.

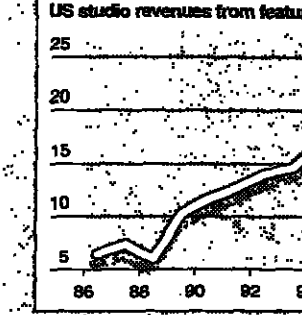
Sources: (1) AC Nielsen EDI and Variety; (2) Screen Finance (3) Wall Street Journal, Feb 15 1998. Graphics sources: Financial Times Screen Finance; survey by Goldman Sachs. Graphics: Steve Villiers. Research: Matt Keating. Dan Glaister is the Guardian's arts correspondent.

Selling celluloid

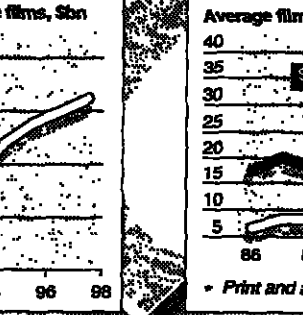
Film budget costs can be deceptive. There are plenty of hidden extras, adding around \$40 million to the final cost of a typical US studio film.

US: \$5m Global \$1m

Revenue goes up...



...so do prices



* Print and advertising costs in the US alone

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Watchdog fines Britannic

Rupert Jones

B RITANNIC Assurance is the latest big-name firm to be hit with a six-figure fine as regulators intensify their crack-down on companies guilty of pensions mis-selling.

The Birmingham-based insurance group was ordered yesterday to pay £525,000 plus £125,000 costs — equalling the record penalty imposed on fellow insurer London & Manchester Assurance on January 28.

The Personal Investment Authority, which issued the fine, said the company had admitted a number of failures linked to mis-selling, including not complying with guidance from the regulators and not tracking down investors who may have been given bad pensions advice.

Yesterday's announcement means the PIA has netted nearly £3 million in fines relating to the scandal. Nearly 50 firms have been fined since the end of 1995,



with penalties ranging from £500 to six-figure sums. Some 1,500 firms are taking part in the mis-selling review.

The income the PIA has received from fines is so substantial that this year it has not had to increase its members' fees.

PIA staff who visited Britannic in January 1997 found that it had not been tracking down some of its affected customers and had failed to iden-

High Court bans two more Barings Bank executives from holding directorships

Julia Finch

TWO more senior executives who held top jobs at Barings Bank, which collapsed in 1995 after rogue trader Nick Leeson ran up losses of \$830 million in Singapore, have been disqualified from acting as company directors.

Peter Norris, who as chief executive of Barings investment banking operation was Leeson's ultimate boss, was banned from running a company for four years. Barings' former group treasurer, Tony Hawes, was disqualified for five years.

The two latest disqualifications mean five former top Barings managers have

been banned from being directors. They were obtained at the High Court by the president of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett.

Two weeks ago, Mary Walz, Barings' former head of equity products and the bank's ex-head of treasury, Ian Hopkins, were disqualified for two years and five years respectively.

Last summer former bank director George Maclean was banned from holding directorships for four years on the grounds of serious incompetence.

In 1996, Ms Walz had un-

successfully sued the bank for a £500,000 bonus she claimed she was entitled to. Mr Hopkins was one of the few Barings executives to emerge with any credit after the Leeson scandal. He told regulators that he repeatedly warned the bank that Leeson's trading was dangerous, but that his concerns were ignored. His assertions were supported by the findings of regulators in Singapore.

The DTI is still pursuing actions to have five other former Barings executives banned as directors.

Notebook

Rich pickings at the high table



Edited by
Alex Brummer

THE four million Halifax shareholders who hung on to their stock after the group's transfer to the stock market are being well rewarded. They have already seen a 25 per cent capital gain on their shares thanks to the boom in the financial sector of the FTSE. The company is paying a first-year dividend of 17.5p per share, equal to 27.5p for the average small shareholder. It is promising more wealth to come in the months ahead with a share buyback worth £1 billion.

If the Halifax had stayed in the mutual sector, these benefits could arguably have been shared with members through higher returns on savings and cheaper mortgages, but that is another debate. In terms of profits Halifax sits on the high table in UK finance with a 15 per cent gain in a year of transition, which is better than NatWest and Barclays, but does not match up to the high quality Lloyds TSB performance. In cost terms the Halifax, which has a much simpler business, remains the leader of the pack with a 40.8 per cent cost-income ratio.

That said, the Halifax has problems ahead as it seeks to establish itself as a full service consumer bank. Firstly, it remains essentially a mortgage bank with 80 per cent of profits coming from this source. Although there are indications that the bank's insurance business is becoming more important since the Clerical Medical absorption, this is a slow process. Secondly, the 1997 results follow a relatively buoyant period in the housing market. All the indications are that 1998 will be heavier going with a slower economy, the rise in mortgage rates and the increase in competition.

The 70 or so remaining mutuals have sought to take advantage of their status to offer better deals and at the margins can start to chip away at Halifax dominance. As important, the banks, notably Lloyds TSB (with the Chelsea and Gloucester franchises), have shown they are quite skilful in this area. Then there are the newcomers from Tesco to Virgin with their challenge in the money arena from savings products to pensions. The advent of the individual savings account could intensify this. As a plc the Halifax will have a tougher time justifying its existence.

Granada slip

THE Granada World in Action programme is a beacon for investigative journalism in a television industry which has come to believe that the fly-on-the-wall documentary is a substitute

for genuine campaigning reporting. It is therefore unfortunate that Granada chose to take on Marks & Spencer over the issue of child labour in Morocco. The use of child labour, wherever it occurs, is a vile practice and that is why the International Labour Organisation has been wheeled into action to try to produce a convention to stamp it out.

But among all the companies which sell goods on Britain's high streets, including such US interlopers as Gap, M&S has one of the best records on labour conditions in the factories of its suppliers. Moreover, while other companies source abroad on price alone from as far away as Vietnam, M&S has largely been responsible for the survival of an active UK textile and clothing industry. It still sources 76 per cent of its goods in the UK (worth about £5.3 billion in the last financial year) ensuring in effect that Britain's trade deficit in this area is negligible.

Its response to the discovery of a labelling and production problem at one of its suppliers — focused on in the Granada programme — was not to cut and run, but to improve tight standards. Factories producing the St Michael brand are now required to produce exclusively for M&S so there is no mix-up. And employees in the overseas plants are required to be provided with similar facilities to those in the UK — with a minimum working age of 15 years old. When there are so many targets to attack, it is a shame that Granada went for the wrong one.

Rhodes scholars

NO outfit founded by the ruthless Cecil Rhodes needs any lessons in either commercial strategy or public relations. Any normal organisation reporting full-year results down 9 per cent may have been expected to mumble a few apologies and suggest shareholders hang on for the inevitable upturn.

Only De Beers could get away with upstaging its own results with the news of the world's first "branded" diamonds. Buried deep within the De Beers gems will be an inscription and an individual registration number. Raffles-style burglars beware.

Now, all those millions of dollars' worth of generic advertising of the "diamond is forever" variety will have a slightly sharper focus. The branding will be available not only for the 50-odd per cent of the world's stones mined by De Beers but for the 70-80 per cent sold through the De Beers cartel.

All of which is hard lines on Argyle, owner of the world's biggest mine, in Australia, which walked out of the cartel in summer 1996. And all of which may help to explain why Russia is felt obliged to rejoin the De Beers club in October 1997, after a period of chest-beating mineral nationalism. With Canada lumbering up as a major contender there has never been a better time for De Beers to start branding. Cecil would have been proud.



Tête-à-tête... Scott McNealy of Sun Microsystems and James Barksdale of Netscape confer during a senate hearing as their rival Bill Gates (left) looks on. PHOTOGRAPH: LARRY DOWNING

Bill Gates denies bully-boy tactics

Mark Tran in New York

BILL GATES, testifying on Capitol Hill for the first time, yesterday came out fighting in his defence of Microsoft against accusations that the computer software group threatens competition and innovation.

"I can say without hesitation that it is not, nor has it ever been the intention of my company to turn the information superhighway into a toll road," the Microsoft chairman said.

"In any case, the beauty of the Internet is that it cannot

be controlled or dominated. It is a creative, living medium."

Shedding his usual brash persona for an earnest and respectful attitude, Mr Gates told a packed hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee that Microsoft "does not have monopoly power in the business of developing and licensing of computer operating systems".

Mr Gates denied that it was ever Microsoft's intention to use its dominance of operating systems, where it holds an 86 per cent market share, to gain control of the Internet.

Not only was Mr Gates ap-

"I can say without hesitation that it is not my company's intention to turn the superhighway into a toll road"

Bill Gates in his Capitol Hill testimony

pearing before a congressional committee for the first time, it was also one of the few times that Mr Gates was sitting at the same table as some of his fiercest competitors: James Barksdale, chairman of Netscape, the Internet browser company, and Scott McNealy, chairman of Sun Microsystems. Both are suing Microsoft.

Mr Gates' Washington visit comes as his company is

being put on the defensive by complaints from competitors that Microsoft uses unfair business practices. Microsoft has also been sued by the Justice Department for allegedly breaking a 1995 anti-trust agreement by requiring personal-computer makers to distribute Microsoft's Internet browser as a condition for licensing Windows 95.

The department is considering whether to launch a

broader anti-trust suit. Mr Barksdale upstaged Mr Gates when he asked for a show of hands from the audience as to how many of them used the Windows operating system. When almost all indicated that they did, Mr Barksdale turned to the senators and said: "That is a monopoly."

Netscape, maker of the Navigator Internet browser, has accused Microsoft of the same charges as the Justice Department. Mr Barksdale argued that as a monopolist, Microsoft had to play by a different set of rules. It could not, he said, use its monopoly power to gain advantage in

another market. "It must be held accountable for its action in trying to intimidate PC manufacturers."

Mr McNealy said: "Microsoft has a monopoly position that they could use to leverage their way into banking, newspapers, cable and broadband. Internet service providers and databases browsers. You name it."

Mr Gates compared Microsoft to IBM, apparently unchallenged in its heyday in the 1970s. But, because of competition and innovation, IBM's position was undermined. Microsoft's apparent dominance was similarly ephemeral.

Battle of egos fear over Energy Group

Celia Weston
Industrial Correspondent

THE multi-billion-pound tug-of-war for ownership of British power company Energy Group showed no sign of slackening yesterday as the two American utilities continued to top each other's bids.

Texas Utilities increased its bid yesterday to \$40p a share, valuing Energy Group at \$4.5 billion and topping PacificCorp's bid on Monday of \$30p. That offer was in response to a \$10p bid from Texas.

But PacificCorp made clear the fight was far from over, saying details of its latest counter-bid would be announced in due course.

The rival companies also sought to underpin their positions through buying stakes in Energy Group. PacificCorp secured 8.8 per cent before renewed bidding pushed the price up. Texas Utilities announced last night it had spent \$1 billion (5900 million)

buying 13.9 per cent of Energy Group shares, after securing US regulatory clearance to purchase stock.

A fund management organisation operated by financier George Soros also had to declare its interest in Energy Group when it increased its stake to 1.25 per cent.

The bids battle is beginning to worry City analysts, who said that the higher the price went above \$40p, the harder it was to justify.

Concern was also growing about the conduct of the Energy Group board, which has endorsed three successive and competing offers, and was described by one commentator as "looking like they're along for the ride".

Another analyst said: "There's a danger that this turns into a battle of egos rather than a battle of business logic."

The high profile of the takeover contest may also make it difficult for politicians and regulatory authorities to ignore.

PacificCorp gained UK regu-

latory approval for a bid last December and on February 3 made an agreed offer of 76p per share. US regulators also agreed to a bid, conditional on the sale of two Arizona coal mines owned by Peabody, Energy Group's coal business.

Texas, however, will have to publish its offer document before it can enter official negotiations to secure full regulatory approval.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity industry watchdog, is expected to issue a consultation document in the next few days specifying what undertakings he requires on access to financial information and measures to ringfence the assets of Energy Group's regulated business, Eastern Electricity.

Electricity generator National Power yesterday announced price cuts of £130 million for 1998, made possible by lower coal prices that, if passed on in full, could mean annual savings of £12 per domestic user and £25 each for business customers.

Halifax dashes hopes of £4bn windfall for investors

Teresa Hunter

HOPES of a £4 billion windfall for Halifax's 4 million investors were dashed yesterday when the bank announced a more modest £1 billion purchase of its shares.

The Halifax, which has been sitting on excess capital estimated at £4 billion since its June flotation, had previously indicated it might follow the Woolwich lead by opting for a special dividend.

Instead, it yesterday began the process of buying 4 per cent of its shares. This will increase the returns to investors over the longer term as it increases the value of the remaining shares as well as raising dividend payments — but reduces hope of an instant payout.

While the Halifax announced a 15 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1.6 billion, customers left the institution in droves following its stock market debut. The bank captured £11.6 billion of new

mortgages, but a rash of redemptions saw its net lending collapse to 6 per cent of the overall market, compared with around 15 per cent in a typical year.

The Halifax warned that the housing market would remain flat next year, and that competition for mortgage business would intensify.

The bank fared even worse on the savings front, as investors withdrew £615 million more than they deposited in the first net outflow of funds in its history.

The buy-back decision comes in the wake of the bank's failure to find a suitable acquisition in the UK. Chief executive Mike Blackburn said UK companies were too expensive: "If you pay too high a price you will regret at your leisure."

Chairman John Foulds indicated that the former building society had now turned its attention to Europe. He said: "It is likely that the Halifax will move into Europe but it's got to be on a worthwhile scale and at a sensible

price. This is a very long game of chess."

Attempts to diversify the business through organic growth proved slower than anticipated, largely due to the high costs of establishing new operations.

The bulk of profits continued to flow from its core savings and mortgage business, up 19 per cent to £1.3 billion. Insurance profits grew by just 2 per cent to £142 million, from other consumer lending by 8 per cent to £42 million, while the Treasury operation saw profits plunge by 15 per cent to £77 million.

The returns from the long-term investment products grew by 180 per cent to £129 million following the acquisition of Clerical Medical. Overall restructuring of the business led to the loss of 2,000 jobs.

The 4 million small shareholders remaining out of the 7 million at flotation will benefit from a 17.5p ordinary dividend to be paid in May, worth 53.75p to the typical shareholder.

Union fights derecognition move by security company

Seamus Milne
Labour Editor

THE country's largest security firm has said it plans to derecognise the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union next month, just as the Government prepares to finalise proposals for a right to union recognition where more than half a workforce wants it.

The AEEU has called an industrial action ballot over the issue at ADT Fire and Security created out of three businesses at the end of last year and owned by the US conglomerate Tyco.

The union said last night it was confident that its members at the firm would strike if necessary. The company has given the AEEU 60 days' notice of its intention to end the union's collective bargaining agreements with two of the three merged companies on

the grounds that only a minority of the new firm's 4,400 employees are AEEU members.

The union counters that it has only ever represented the skilled workers who install and maintain security intruder systems — such as burglar alarms, closed circuit television and fire alarms — and that it has a clear majority of the 1,500 security engineers now employed by the firm.

The dispute therefore centres on one of the key controversies surrounding Labour's commitment to a right to define the bargaining unit or "relevant workforce" amongst whom unions must secure a majority support to qualify for recognition rights.

The CBI wants the bargaining unit to be based on "existing business structures", while the TUC believes other factors should be taken into account.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.35	Germany 2.905	Malaysia 6.05	Singapore 2.80
Austria 20.44	Greece 461.87	Spain 16.38	South Africa 7.30
Belgium 5.838	Hong Kong 12.38	Sweden 2.72	Switzerland 2.85
Canada 2.277	India 65.11	Switzerland 2.85	USA 1.605
Cyprus 0.622	Ireland 1.172	Taiwan 2.72	
Denmark 11.14	Israel 5.80	Turkey 365.400	
Finland 6.90	Italy 2.883		
France 9.723			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shekel and mdr)

Boxing
Warren
and
King
stand
toe
to toe
John Rawling

Herby card

Boxing

Warren and King stand toe to toe

John Rawling on today's first round of a heavyweight court fight in London

A BOXING promoter could not have staged it better. In the red corner today America's No. 1 heavyweight, Don King, and in the blue corner the champion of Britain and Europe, Frank Warren. Face to face in a High Court hearing, two of the most powerful men in sport.

The top referee Mills Lane, a district judge in Reno, Nevada, would be tempted to shout: "I want a good clean fight, defend yourself at all times. Now, let's get it on!" The judge in Court 60 today, Mr Justice Lightman, may take a more matter-of-fact approach.

He will hear representations from counsel for the two men. King begins his action against Warren, his former business partner, over an agreement which broke down in acrimony three months ago.

King claims he is owed millions of pounds and is entitled to a share of all profits made from fighters promoted by Warren, such as the World Boxing Association featherweight champion Naseem



Happier times... the days when the top promoters Frank Warren, left, and Don King could be found sharing the same table

Hamed and the WBA super-middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe.

To heighten media awareness of the case, King, through his London solicitors Bird and Bird, has employed a public-relations company. Warren, on going to New York to stage Hamed's December 19 contest against Kevin Kelley, had announced that he was there "to screw King and knock him out of boxing", the reaction of King may have been predictable. In a number of leaks King's intentions have been made

known. "The aim is not to hurt the boxers but to hit Warren financially. It could cost him tens of millions," an insider said. The combined legal costs are already estimated to be more than £1 million.

Warren and King had a loose working arrangement dating back to 1985 and it was made permanent by a three-year deal signed in 1994. According to Warren, the deal assured when King could not produce shows and television dates for his chief attraction, Hamed, it was then that Warren independently negoti-

ated a deal for the Sheffield fighter to appear on the American cable-TV network Home Box Office.

King, who is likely to give evidence in court, claimed Warren had signed an extension to their promotional deal and had no right to exclude him from the proceeds. Warren will counter by claiming that King falsified that particular contract and that the American promoter is not only trying to deny him millions of dollars but has short-changed fighters under his promotion.

In a recent disclosure, Mike Tyson said King owed him \$30 million (about £18 million). Now the former international Boxing Federation featherweight champion Tom Johnson is alleging that King paid him only \$300,000 of the \$1 million Warren provided for the American's part in the unification world-title fight with Hamed in February 1997.

The two court protagonists have other worries. King, minus Tyson, is fighting for his promotional life and faces a retrial in New York next month which could result in

his imprisonment; he faces a charge of making a fraudulent insurance claim against Lloyd's of London. Meanwhile, Warren and his Sports Network Europe company are under investigation for alleged VAT irregularities.

Mr Justice Lightman will also consider an application from King for a committal order against Warren for failing to comply with a court order to release details of his bank accounts.

Yesterday Warren said: "I know I am in the right, and I will fight him all the way."

SPORTS NEWS 13

Racing

Jockey Club close book on Top Cees case

Tony Paley

THE Jockey Club has sought to put an end to the Top Cees affair with the widely expected announcement that they will not be re-opening the case.

After considering the issues raised by Jack and Lynda Ramsden and Kieren Fallon against Mirror Group Newspapers, the stewards ruled there are "no grounds" for a further inquiry.

But it emphasised that in future a new protocol, to be introduced from the start of the flat racing season, will make it easier to re-open inquiries under the non-triers' rule when offenders risk stiffer penalties.

The stewards also pledged to continue to issue private letters to licensed individuals and found "no evidence of misconduct" among its stewards' secretaries.

Jockey Club executive director Christopher Foster said: "The stewards have carefully considered all the relevant matters raised by the libel action. The case put the episode under detailed and very public scrutiny and the stewards do not believe there is any merit in further investigating events which took place nearly three years ago."

The Ramsdens, together with Fallon, successfully sued MGN over an editorial in The Sporting Life that claimed they had conspired to deceive the public by not trying to win the Swaffham Handicap with Top Cees and finished fifth in April 1995.

19-day hearing. It was revealed for the first time that Fallon, though cleared by a stewards' inquiry that followed the Swaffham, had received a warning letter from the Disciplinary Committee.

Such letters are issued when the Jockey Club believes that riders are in danger of breaching the rules of racing and will continue to be used, but they will not be made public. Malcolm Wallace, director of regulation, said: "Having taken legal advice we decided not to make the letters public, because to do so would be unfair when the person concerned has not been found in breach of any rule. These letters are intended to prevent breaches of the rules and are a part of an educational process aimed at maintaining and improving standards."

"The public is not disadvantaged because the individual concerned has not been found in any breach of any rule."

The Jockey Club also considered allegations made in court by Lynda Ramsden that her stable was being "witch-hunted" but an internal Jockey Club inquiry has established that there is no evidence of misconduct by any stewards' secretary.

Pre-race photo testing of runners is likely to be introduced as soon as the technology becomes widely available, according to the Jockey Club's senior veterinarian. Around 10 per cent of runners are currently post-race tested but Peter Webbon, the Jockey Club's chief veterinary advisor, said: "There are some very strong arguments for testing runners before rather than after they race."

Wetherby card with form guide

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.20 Polydamos	Organ Bachel
3.00 Polydamos	Organ Bachel
3.30 Polydamos	Organ Bachel
4.00 Polydamos	Organ Bachel
4.30 Polydamos	Organ Bachel
5.00 Polydamos	Organ Bachel

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

Seven day winners: None. Blackheart first time: None. Wetherby 3.00 September. Prices in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. F.Fat

2.00 HAREWOOD NOVICE HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

2.30 BUCKINGHAM NOVICE HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

3.00 HECSTY ROUSSEL PANACHE MARES' HUP NOVICE HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

3.30 HELMSLEY NOVICE HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

4.00 EAST KESWICK HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

4.35 ASKHAM BRYAN HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

5.05 NICKLETHWAITE HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

Wolverhampton (AW)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

1.50 CAPRICORN MAIDEN STAKES (DIV 1)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

2.20 CAPRICORN MAIDEN STAKES (DIV 2)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

2.50 AREAS CLAIMING STAKES

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

3.20 TAURUS CONDITIONS STAKES

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Chepstow

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

2.10 GREAT EXPECTATIONS HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

2.40 POACHER'S SELLING HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

3.10 CAPREY'S IRISH LAKE NOVICE HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

3.40 PRESTIGE NOVICE HURDLE

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
1.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.10 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.20 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.30 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.40 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
1.50 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)
2.00 Polydamos	Polydamos (nap)

Left-handed circuit of 11m with 300yd run-in which is slightly uphill. Going: Good to soft, soft in places. Donkeys blinkers. No top form rated. Long distance travellers: Avon Express (3.30) C. Epton Barks 200 miles. Polydamos (2.00) & Tiddler (4.00) & Bailey, Barks 198 miles. Sweet Land (5.00) M. Bradstock. Over 194 miles.

